

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TEXT OF DAVID K. SHIPLER ARTICLE IN APRIL 24
NEW YORK TIMES ENTITLED "BETTER ATMOSPHERE IN MOSCOW",
VANCE VISIT EASES FRICTIONS AND PRODUCES SOME HARD
BARGAINING, BUT BASIC ISSUES REMAIN

BEGIN TEXT:

THE SHARP EDGE IN RECENT SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS HAS
BEEN BLUNTED BY SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS R. VANCE'S VISIT
TO MOSCOW, WHICH ENDED TODAY. BUT THE MAIN ISSUES OF
DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO POWERS REMAIN FAR FROM
RESOLUTION, AND THE RESTORATION OF SOVIET CONFIDENCE IN
THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AS A NEGOTIATING PARTNER
APPEARS FAR FROM COMPLETE.

BOTH SIDES WORKED HARD TO CREATE A CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE
IN AND OUTSIDE THE TALKS, WHICH RAN FOR TWO DAYS WITH FOR-
EIGH MINISTER ANDREI A. GROMYKO AND TWO HOURS WITH LEONID
I. BREZHNEV, THE COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER. THE RESULTING
CORDIALITY CONTRASTED MARKEDLY WITH THE RECRIMINATION AND
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ACRIMONY OF MR. VANCE'S LAST TRIP HERE 13 MONTHS AGO.

TO THE EXTENT THAT MOOD IS AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, THE TRIP MUST BE JUDGED A SUCCESS,
FOR THE PARTIES ESSENTIALLY PUT ASIDE THEIR INTRACTABLE
CONFLICTS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS, THE NEUTRON BOMB AND THE
SITUATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, AND CONCENTRATED ON

SEEKING AREAS OF ACCORD IN THE EFFORT TO LIMIT STRATEGIC ARMS, SPENDING MOST OF THE TIME IN HARD BARGAINING LIKE BUSINESSMEN HAMMERING OUT A CONTRACT.

AS EXPECTED, THIS PRODUCED NO DRAMATIC SETTLEMENT, BUT RATHER "A NARROWING OF THE PARTIES' POSITIONS," IN THE WORDS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE. THIS REPRESENTED ONLY SLIGHT FORWARD MOTION, BUT MOTION THAT WAS CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL TO BREAK THE TENSION THAT HAD DEVELOPED IN THE PRECEDING MONTHS.

"WE ARE NOT IN A PERIOD OF SPECTACULAR BREAKTHROUGHS," SAID ONE HIGH AMERICAN OFFICIAL. "BUT THERE IS MOVEMENT, AND THAT SHOULD KEEP THINGS ON AN EVEN KEEL."

THE MODEST GAINS PROMPTED THE COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER PRAVDA TO COMMENT TODAY THAT DESPITE THE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING A NEW ARMS TREATY, "EVEN MORE EVIDENT IS THE FACT THAT THE DIVERGENCIES CAN BE OVERCOME PROVIDED THERE IS GOOD WILL ON BOTH SIDES." IT ADDED THAT "THE CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION OF THE USSR CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO THE CREATION OF A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE AT THE TALKS."

STILL, THE RUSSIANS CANNOT ESCAPE THE UNEASY FEELING THAT WHEN THEY NEGOTIATE WITH MR. VANCE AND HIS TOP TEAM OF PAUL C. WARNKE, HEAD OF THE DISARMAMENT AGENCY, MARSHALL UNCLASSIFIED

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D. SHULMAN, HIS SENIOR ADVISER ON SOVIET AFFAIRS, AND LESLIE H. GELB, DIRECTOR OF POLITICO-MILITARY AFFAIRS, THEY ARE DEALING WITH THE ADMINISTRATION FACTION MOST COMMITTED TO ARMS CONTROL, WHILE BACK IN WASHINGTON "ANTI-SOVIET" FORCES WHICH THEY SEE AS EXEMPLIFIED BY ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, PRESIDENT CARTER'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, ARE PUSHING IN OTHER DIRECTIONS.

A SOVIET SPECIALIST ON AMERICAN AFFAIRS EVEN WORRIED PRIVATELY THE OTHER DAY THAT MR. BRZEZINSKI WOULD HAVE THE PRESIDENT'S EAR ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY DURING MR. VANCE'S ABSENCE FROM THE CAPITAL. AND AN OFFICIAL WITH THE VANCE PARTY NOTED THAT THERE WAS SOME CAUSE FOR MOSCOW'S CONCERN, NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE OF MR. BRZEZINSKI HIMSELF, BUT BECAUSE HIS TOUGH OUTSPOKENNESS AGAINST SOVIET BEHAVIOR REFLECTS A STRONG CURRENT OF OPINION IN AMERICAN POLITICS.

SOVIET OFFICIALS SEE THE PRESIDENT AS TOO VULNERABLE TO THE EMERGING MOOD IN WASHINGTON OF HOSTILITY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION AND AS TOO HESITANT TO FACE THE POLITICAL BATTLE THAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO GAIN PENTAGON ACQUIESCENCE IN A NEW ARMS TREATY AND TO WIN SENATE RATIFICATION.

THAT IS THEIR EXPLANATION FOR THE UNITED STATES' NOT MAKING ANYTHING MORE THAN MINOR OFFERS IN THE STRATEGIC ARMS TALKS AFTER WHAT MOSCOW REGARDED AS MAJOR SOVIET CONCESSIONS LAST FALL. ONE AMERICAN OBSERVED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS THEN BARGAINING WITHIN ITSELF.

ONE OF MR. VANCE'S REPORTED OBJECTIVES HERE WAS TO CONVINCE THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS INTENT ON REACHING AGREEMENT ON A NEW TREATY AND THAT NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES WOULD NOT BE MADE SUSCEPTIBLE TO AMERICAN DISPLEASURE IN OTHER AREAS, SUCH AS SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA.

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THE PATTERN OF TALKS WAS APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE AS MUCH. AFTER A GENERAL REVIEW OF RELATIONS, MR. VANCE WENT IMMEDIATELY INTO THE STRATEGIC ARMS PROBLEMS AND STAYED WITH THEM INTENSIVELY UNTIL THE TIME HAD BEEN ALMOST EXHAUSTED. THEN HE DISCUSSED THE MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA, HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER ISSUES. SIGNIFICANTLY, THE POSSIBLE AMERICAN DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTRON BOMB, AGAINST WHICH MOSCOW HAS BEEN WAGING A SHRILL PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN, RECEIVED JUST A FLEETING MENTION BY MR. BREZHNEV.

IT WAS NOT KNOWN WHETHER MR. VANCE MENTIONED THAT SENATE CONFIRMATION OF A TREATY COULD BE JEOPARDIZED BY SOVIET MISBEHAVIOR ON HUMAN RIGHTS OR IN AFRICA. THE POINT HAS BEEN MADE BEFORE, AND RUSSIANS HAVE REPLIED THAT IF THE PRESIDENT WANTED TO GET SOMETHING THROUGH CONGRESS, HE COULD -- A MISREADING, PERHAPS, OF WASHINGTON'S POLITICAL DYNAMICS, BUT ONE THAT WAS REINFORCED BY THE PASSAGE OF THE SECOND PANAMA CANAL TREATY SHORTLY BEFORE MR. VANCE'S VISIT.

JUDGING FROM TODAY'S PRAVDA COMMENTARY, THE FIRST ON THE TALKS, MOSCOW'S CONCERNS ABOUT MR. CARTER AND THE ATMOSPHERE IN WASHINGTON WERE NOT ENTIRELY LAID TO REST. THE NEWSPAPER STRESSED THE DAMAGE THAT IT SAID THE "SELF-INTERESTED LONGINGS OF THE RULERS OF THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" HAD DONE TO THE ARMS NEGOTIATIONS, AND IT CONTENDED THAT DETENTE FACED STRONG OPPOSITION BY "THOSE CIRCLES IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH ARE STILL LOATH TO DISCARD THEIR ADVENTURIST DE- (GARBLED).

THE RUSSIANS SEE A NEW TREATY LIMITING LONG-RANGE NUCLEAR MISSILES AS THE CENTERPIECE OF DETENTE, SO IMPORTANT THAT
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MR. BREZHNEV HAS NOT WANTED TO MEET PRESIDENT CARTER WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT READY TO SIGN. THE DESIRE FOR

SOMETHING CONCRETE TO PRODUCE AT A SUMMIT MEETING GROWS OUT OF MR. BREZHNEV'S INCLINATION TOWARD CONSERVATIVE DIPLOMACY AND HIS RECOGNITION THAT SUMMITRY CARRIES RISKS OF BEING DOMINATED BY ARGUMENT.

THIS PROBABLY EXPLAINS, IN PART, THE SOVIET IMPATIENCE WITH THE SLOW PACE OF THE TALKS, FOR SOME OF MR. BREZHNEV'S ADVISERS BELIEVE THAT PERSONAL CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS WOULD EASE COMMUNICATIONS AND FACILITATE SOLUTIONS TO A WHOLE RANGE OF PROBLEMS.

A MEMBER OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE SUGGESTED IN AN INTERVIEW WITH AMERICAN REPORTERS THE OTHER DAY THAT A STRATEGIC ARMS TREATY WOULD IMPROVE THE CHANCES TO CONCLUDE A TEST BAN TREATY, REACH AN AGREEMENT ON DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, IMPROVE TRADE RELATIONS AND FACILITATE DISCUSSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND OTHER ISSUES.

BUT FOR THE MOMENT THESE DIFFICULTIES REMAIN MAJOR POINTS OF DISCORD. WASHINGTON IS STILL ALARMED THAT AS MANY AS 40,000 CUBAN TROOPS ARE ESTIMATED TO BE IN AFRICA AND WORRIED THAT HAVING FOUGHT IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA, THEY MAY GO TO THE AID OF THE RHODESIAN GUERRILLAS. MOSCOW IS STILL ANNOYED BY WASHINGTON'S SUPPORT OF WHAT THE SOVIET PRESS CALLS A "SEPARATE DEAL" BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL, THUS REDUCING PROSPECTS FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE IN WHICH THE RUSSIANS COULD PARTICIPATE. END TEXT.
CHRISTOPHER

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